Miscellaneous Reading

How The Robin Came.

Happy young friends, sit by me,
Under May's blown apple tree,
Hear a story, strange and old,
By the wild red Indian told,
How the robin came to be.

Once a great chief left his son—
Well-beloved, his only son—
When the boy was well-nigh grown,
In the trial-lodge alone,
Left for tortures long and slow
Youths like him must undergo,
With their pride of manhood test,
Lacking water, food, and rest.
Seven days the fast he kept;
Seven nights he never slept.
Then the poor boy, wrung with pain,
Weak from nature's overstrain,
Faltering, moaned a low complaint—
"Spare me, Father, for I faint!"
But the chieftain, haughty-eyed,
Hid his pity in his pride.
"You shall be a hunter good,
Knowing never lack of food;
You shall be a warrior great,
Wise as fox and strong as bear;
Many scalps your belt shall wear,
If with patient heart you wait
One day more!" the father said.
When, next morn, the lodge he sought,
And boiled samp and moose-meat brought
For the boy, he found him dead.

As with grief his grave they made,
And his bow beside him laid,
Pipe, and knife, and wampum-braid—
On the lodge-top overhead,
Preening smooth its breast of red
And the brown coat that it wore,
Sat a bird, unknown before.
And as if with human tongue:
"Mourn me not," it said or sung;
"I, a bird, am still your son,
Happier than if hunter fleet,
Or a brave, before your feet
Laying scalps in battle won.
Friend of man, my song shall cheer
Lodge and corn land; hovering near,
To each wigwam I shall bring
Tidings of the coming spring;
Every child my voice shall know
In the moon of melting snow,
When the maple's red bud swells,
And the wind flower lifts its bells.
As their fond companion
Men shall henceforth own your son,
And my song shall testify
That of human kin am I."

Thus the Indian legend saith
How, at first, the robin came
With a sweeter life from death,
Bird for boy, and still the same
If my young friends doubt that this
Is the robin's genesis,
Not in vain is still the myth
If a truth be found therewith:
Unto a gentleness belong
Gifts unknown to pride and wrong;
Happier far than hate is praise—
He who sings than he who slays.

Riding Habits.

[From a London Fashion Letter.]

I assume that my women readers who live in civilised places like to appear well and suitably clad when on horseback, so I commence my fashion letter with a short account of some of the newest riding habits to be seen at this time in town. There is a happy medium between a habit of preposterous length, which is apt at times to endanger the rider, and the ugly curtailment that frequently brings about a display that is the reverse of delicate, and makers of new habits have adopted the "juste milieu." It is intended as a concession to the prevailing love of color that a narrow band of colored cloth shall be placed between the collar of the riding habit and the narrow linen band that is worn with it. Further than this horsewomen who wish to be correctly attired do not go. Still, many women have a preference for jackets cut after the manner of those worn by Amazons of the seventeenth century, which are similarly braided with gold and silver braid set in close rows upon the vest, while the lappets, cuffs, and wide square pockets are made of cloth a contrast in color to that of which the jacket is made. The braid may be set horizontally across the vest or lengthwise upon it, but in either case is hemmed in with one or a double row of gold buttons, flat bright gilt buttons being the sort preferred. There is also another eccentric make of riding habits that is less striking and more elegant than that just described, the details of which are as follows:—The habit of fine grey cloth is cut with square basques, shorter behind than in front. It is fashioned so as to admit the insertion of a full pleated vest of twilled silk, shot grey and white. The gauntlet sleeve, stand-up collar, and other borders, are decorated with a pattern of black and silver braid sewn so close together as to have the effect of toning down the brilliance of the metallic braid. Again, I see many short, jaunty little jackets made very close to the figure, but arranged to show a full vest colored silk beneath. The basques of such jackets are exceedingly short; sometimes they are cut with short points back and front, and merely curved up at the hips close to the waist. Another style is to elongate the basque part till it extends nearly to or even below the knees. A small square pocket to hold the kerchief is fixed high over the left breast. Hats of almost any shape may be worn, provided they are becoming. Suede gloves with gauntlet tops are fashionable; so also tan kids fitting close at the wrist. To be well gloved is absolutely imperative. It is more essential to the equestrienne to be above reproach in respect to her gloves than to a pedestrian, who conceal shabby or ill cut gloves in her muff or by other device; but a horsewoman's hands are always "en evidence." Silk handkerchiefs with broad colored borders are considered most correct.

The House.

Oysters.—Take a dozen large oysters, dry them in a soft cloth, and dip them into beaten egg, and afterwards into finely-grated bread-crumbs. Rub the bars of a double wire gridiron with a little butter, place the oysters upon it, and broil them over a clear but not fierce fire. When one side is done, turn them upon the other. Put a small lump of fresh butter upon a hot dish, lay the oysters upon it, sprinkle a little pepper over them, and serve.

Sago Pudding Boiled.—Put an ounce and a half of sago to soak for an hour. Strain it, and boil it in a pint of milk till it is clear, and to flavor it add an ounce of blanched and pounded almonds, or the thin rind of a lemon. Pour the sago out and stir till cool. Beat it up together with the well-wisked yolks of five and the whites of two eggs, a little sugar, and a glassful of sherry. Turn the sugar into a well buttered basin, which it will quite fill; lay a buttered paper on the top, and tie a floured cloth securely over it. Plunge it into a saucepan of fast-boiling water, and keep it boiling till done enough, which will be in about an hour. Move the pudding about occasionally for the first quarter of an hour. Serve with half a pint of any fresh fruit boiled with sugar and water to a rich syrup and strained over the pudding.

Beef Steak Stewed with Onions.—Dredge a little pepper and salt over a pound of tender steak. Butter a saucepan which has a tightly fitting lid very quickly, or if preferred, rub it over with good beef dripping. Lay the steak in it, add two large onions thinly sliced and an ounce of butter or dripping. Cover the saucepan closely, and put it by the side of the fire to steam as gently as possible for two hours and a half. Take it up, lay the steak upon a hot dish, put the onions upon it, and serve immediately. It will be found there was sufficient moisture from the onions to make gravy, although no liquor was put into the pan.

THE AGRICULTURIST

Importations of Diseased Animals

The losses which have been sustained during the past twelve or eighteen months by the owners of horses from the serious disease which has affected so many of them, have amounted to a very considerable sum in money value. The knowledge that the disease, whatever it may be, is very easily caught by animals brought into proximity to those that are affected by it renders its presence in the country a source of grave anxiety to all, be they poor or rich, who keep horses either for pleasure or for purposes of business. Opinions differ as to what the disease really is, but it seems to be acknowledged by all that it is almost as uniformly fatal as glanders. That it was introduced into this kingdom by stock imported from California appears to be certain, and a strong feeling exists that all fresh importations should be subjected to inspection by an expert before being allowed to mingle with domestic stock.

The Act that was passed at the last Session of the Legislature under the title of the "Disease among Animals Act" would, if enforced, afford ample protection against the danger of further importation of disease. Unfortunately it remains a dead letter because no provision for fencing of quarantine stations, or for other expenses connected with them was made by the Legislature. Without these accessions it has been deemed futile to appoint inspecting officers. We hope that one of the earliest acts of the Legislature during its coming session will be to provide a remedy for this state of things. It is not a question about which any difference of opinion can exist. Neither is it a matter in which a few only are interested. There are very many here who make their living chiefly by their horses, and of these a considerable proportion, especially among the natives, is made up of people to whom the loss of a single horse is a serious matter. It is not a thing to be wondered at therefore if a report such as got about the town last Tuesday of the landing of diseased horses should have caused something like a scare. The matter is really a very important one, and if the Minister of the Interior should take upon him to incur expenses for the establishment of quarantine stations and put the Act in force at once, he would, we feel sure, have the approval of the whole community and be readily indemnified by the Legislature.

Judge McCully on Farming.

In the *Hawaiian Monthly* for March is given the address on "Farms and Farming in this Kingdom" which His Honor Judge McCully read before the Honolulu Social Science Association. This paper is very interesting and suggestive. It sets out with a comparison between farming and the working of a plantation. The following quotation shows the argument and drift of the whole paper:—

"It is universally recognized that the influence of farming is wholesome to the mind and body. It is not flattery in agricultural addresses to claim that the farming element is the grand conservator of the nation. In the Hawaiian Kingdom we have plantations, sugar and rice, and cattle and sheep ranches. But farms! have we got them? Can we have them, and of what sort? What may be the effect upon the life of the nation or people which is farming here, of having or being without a farming community?

"We are more than two thousand miles from the nearest continent and we import from that distance all our bread stuffs, mosf of potatoes and onions, all our cheese, some of our butter, all of our cured pork and some hogs and poultry, and a list of food articles preserved in pickle, in glass and tin, which covers almost everything we buy off our grocers. It would be far easier to mention the few articles of food produced in the country and to say that all the rest are imported, than to enumerate the necessaries and luxuries which we import.

"The home list is fresh beef, mutton, fish and poultry, all very dear for the quality, milk, some butter, sweet potatoes and taro, with some garden vegetables, in small quantities and not very cheap, scarce eggs, bananas, limes and oranges at higher than New York and London prices, and we import more than nine-tenths of the hay for our horses which are stabled; all our oats, barley, bran and middlings.

"May we not say at once that we are without farms, and that we need them to relieve us in part from this dependence on foreign countries for the necessaries of life; to give us a greater variety of production, that we may not stake so much on the success of sugar; and, greatly, for the wholesome influence of farm life and labor and frugal gains, as contrasted with the influence of plantation life, worked by gangs of men held to their labors by penal laws, owned by non-resident capitalists, frequently by corporations, and pushed only as a scheme for money making. Of course it is very desirable that the plantations should make money, and every person in the community is benefitted by their prosperity, but we plead for farms besides. Now taking the inclination which a certain proportion of the community always have for farming, we may say that there must be some assignable reasons for the non-existence of farms here."

Judge McCully then proceeds to show what has interfered to produce the present state of things and to discuss the probabilities of a change for the better. One of the difficulties, the greatest of all probably, in the way of the farmer here is thus tersely described: "I mention as a fourth difficulty the comprehensive and intrinsic one of determining crops or products which can be raised and can be sold at a profit. And here, as I look over the reports of the old Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society, published from 1850 to 1856, and add my own observations of the number of things of which there has been trial and failure and abandonment, I feel that to rehearse them would present an altogether discouraging view. This paper will not present a pessimist view of our farming possibilities, nor on the other hand an optimist view. It is only the new-comer that says: "you have perpetual summer; you have a choice of climates; what prevents your growing everything."

Having explained the hindrances, the essayist goes on to consider what indications there may be of a favorable change. This is the suggestive and hopeful part of the paper. As an illustration of his idea "that circumstances and conditions relative to farming are changing so as to give us a better hope for farms," Judge McCully cites, "the establishment of the new system of dairy farming near Honoluln" of which he says that it is only new here, being but the home system imported. He describes this system and contrasts it with the absence of system which precedes it. The paper is closed by a recital of several matters which tend to encourage attention to farming at the present time.

Veal.

In Judge McCully's paper on farming we meet with the following remark among the recommendations for improvement of dairy farming, viz.: "Breeding only from thoroughbred bulls—giving away or destroying the bull calves and and the second and third rate heifer calves." The idea of looking upon calves as so valueless that a farmer can afford to destroy them or give them away appers very astonishing to people accustomed to the ways of other countries and who find that they cannot obtain such a thing as *veal* for love or money. What is called veal here is immature beef, the animals from which it comes being killed at two years old. The writer used to find the butchers in the country he last lived in very ready to take his calves at two weeks old although if they had the choice they would stipulate that they be kept for six weeks. A calf from a good Durham cow used at that age to be worth four to four and a half dollars (at ten cents a pound) in a town where real veal was habitually sold at a less price than is charged for the unwholesome and unpalatable article which goes by that name here. Moreover, if two year old beef, being dubbed veal, *were* thereby made fit to eat, no thrifty breeder would part with the animal that yields it. He would know that after all the hazard and expense of rearing had been got over, the beast, whether heifer or steer, would return him far more for keeping than by sale. We have tried in vain to ascertain from whence the custom of killing two year olds for so-called veal was derived. We can only assume that it originated here and we feel very much disposed for curiosity's sake to offer a reward for the discovery of the inventor.

Improving Kitchen Garden Soil.

The following remarks on this subject, by Mr. J. Muir, appeared in a recent issue of the "Garden:"—Before vegetables can be produced in the greatest quantity and of the best quality it is necessary that the soil should be good. In making a new kitchen garden few spots can be found in which the soil all through is thoroughly good to the depth of two or more feet. I have had to deal with gardens in which some parts might be this depth, but in others the soil was of the shallowest and poorest description. Such soils are only suitable for the growth of certain crops, but in a good vegetable garden this should not be so, as every square foot of it should be made to produce whatever kind of crop may be desired. In gardens in which the soil is poor and uneven in depth and the whole inclining to be shallow more time is spent in accomplishing the work necessary to be done than need be; therefore, the fault should be remedied. Where the subsoil is gravel or where there is a good natural drainage, drains will be unnecessary; but where cold and wet, and the surface consequently far from being sweet and mellow, drainage will require attention. In low-lying ground it is an expensive job to drain with good outlets, but on an incline draining can always be readily and cheaply done. There must be at least one main drain into which all the smaller ones should be led, and these should be at least 2½ feet below the surface, with 3-inch earthenware pipes at the bottom, and a quantity of rough stones round them. These should be put in every ten yards or twelve yards apart, and this should be done first in beginning to improve any piece of garden ground. Gardens suffer from want of trenching when the surface soil has been dug over time after time without making any attempt to go down farther than the depth of one spade. The subsoil in that case gets hard, the roots scarcely ever penetrate it; in summer this shallow soil soon dries up, and crops fail. Deep cultivation is a grand thing and should be constantly practised, but harm may in some cases be done by bringing up a large quantity of poor subsoil to the surface and putting the good surface soil down in the bottom, where the roots will be long in finding it or being benefited thereby. Such treatment as this might improve the soil, but it is not a good plan to adopt in order to secure a fine crop of vegetables immediately after trenching, a point which should be kept in view. Trenching need not be annual practice. If the worst of ground is turned up this year it will not require trenching again for a number of years, but many soils which have not been trenched for five or six years would be greatly benefited by being subjected to that operation. Trenching is done in the same way both in the case of new and old soils, and when properly done will be found to be of the greatest advantage to the crops. It simply consists of taking a large opening out at one end of the piece of ground to be operated on, and the soil thus removed at the other end; the opening should be at least 2 feet deep and 2 feet wide. The soil next to this is then turned over into the vacant trench, and so the work goes on to the end. Where the ground is very full of stones these should be collected and placed at the bottom of each trench. As the bottom of each trench is shovelled up a quantity of any old half-decayed vegetable matter, rough manure, charred refuse, and, in short, any material which will improve the soil should be placed in a thick layer at the bottom and then be forked in. The next trench taken out will come on the top of this, and after the top spit has been turned over another layer of manure may be put on just under the surface. In the case of poor subsoils they should be so worked that only a small portion is brought to the surface, and if the manure be placed near them at the bottom they will be in fine order to bring up to the surface two or three years hence. This improves soil greatly, and in time I would undertake to make the most sterile soils fertile by means of this process. Where good manure is to be had it would of course be best to trench a quantity down to the bottom, but it is seldom that the best manure can be had, in sufficient quantity for this, and old refuse answers the purpose very well; in fact this is a good way of getting rid of such material. Just before sowing or planting a quantity of good fresh manure might be forked into the surface with much advantage. This would be a good plan in the case of poor soil, but where the surface was rich in organic matter, especially leaf soil or anything likely to generate fungi, a dressing of lime would be beneficial. We generally apply the lime at the rate of 4 tons to the acre, but this depends a good deal on the state of the soil, as some soils require more than others. Apart from newly trenched soil, we frequently